out prospecting work in respect of mica and graphite by the Department of Geology. Some amount was allotted under this head, but during the operations carried on for the last seven months it has been noticed that certain unanticipated obstacles have arisen for the removal of which they require a certain class of machinery. The amount asked for on that account is Rs. 7,500. I hope the House will have no objection to grant this amount.

The question that Government be granted a sum of Rs 7,500 under Demand XXI—Industries—was put to vote and carried.

The grant was made.

Demand XXX—Scientific and Miscellaneous Departments—Stores Purchase Committee.

Dr. H. Parameswaran : Sir, I beg to move for a grant not exceeding Rs. 2310 under Demand XXX—Scientific and Miscellaneous Departments — Stores Purchase Committee This amount is for the continuance of the repair section attached to the Stores Purchase Committee. In this connexion I may explain that the repair section deals with the repair of all valuable scientific instruments such as theodolites, X-ray instruments, surveying instruments etc. During the last few years when this department was in existence, it has been turning out very useful work. Several instruments which were lying in various Government institutions with minor defects have been repaired and made quite useful. Further Government are very anxious to avoid additional expenditure by the purchase of new instruments. They are anxious as far as possible to see that all such old instruments are first examined and repaired for the use of the offices concerned. In the Budget for the year 1117, provision was made for the continuance of the repair section only for the first six months of 1117. Government are now convinced that on account of the present war situation it has become very necessary to have the help of such a maintenance organisation so that fresh purchases may as far as possible be avoided. It is the aim and function of this department to repair the damaged articles by effecting the needed repairs and this policy is now being vigorously carried out. The usefulness of re-conditioning the various instruments has been testified to by several departmental officers. Hence the necessity has arisen for this supplementary grant to enable the Repair Section to continue to function for the remainder of the year 1117.

The other day I found there was some misconception entertained in some quarters about the activities of the repair section. Therefore I am forced to explain its exact function by quoting a specific instance.

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Dr. H. Parameswaran]

The value of an accurate theodolite can be reckoned now at about Rs. 2000. One department was in possession of such an instrument lying without any use for several years. This was because the instrument had broken its level bubbles and developed other troubles in use. At this stage a demand for a very accurate theodolite arose in connection with the Hydro Electric Project at Munnar. A new one was about to be purchased, for about Rs. 1750. But Government had passed a circular to the effect that no old instrument should be auctioned away and that whenever a new purchase was to be made, it had first to be scrutinised by the Stores Purchase Committee. The Committee keeps a record of all such useful materials that are now lying idle or as excess in various offices. Thus when the new need was reported to the Stores Purchase Committee of Government, a new purchase proposed was stopped and the theodolite I referred to above was taken up and necessary repairs and adjustments were made to it. It was easily reconditioned so to say and sent over to Munnar. It is now reported that it is quite good. In this way Government were saved about Rs. 1500 as a consequence of skilful repairs carried out by repair section on this one item. It goes to prove that the time and trouble spent in the direction of repairs and maintenance of valuable instruments saves a lot to Government. Hence, on account of the present difficult circumstances due to war when fresh import of materials is difficult except under very prohibitive cost, good use has to be made of the repair section of Government. There is another point as well. When statistics were collected of all instruments, possessed by Government in various institutions, it was found that they amounted to about 3 lakhs. Granting that a provision of at least 2 per cent. is justifiable in being spent for the annual maintenance of the same, we see that Government are justified in incurring this small expenditure of Rs. 2,310 asked for, to continue this useful repair section of Government.

The actual demand now made is less than this justifiable figure for the maintenance of these instruments and for their being carefully looked into periodically. It may be interesting to know that some years ago some of these theodolites and levels were being sent systematically to outside places for such repairs. Before embarking on this new organisation of Government I was careful to collect the financial figures involved. I found that during the last few years the actual expenditure incurred by Government on a few items to be Rs. 11,500. I was convinced that these repairs could have been done here much more efficiently and at much less cost. Therefore I request that this demand be passed,

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Mr. V. Sankara Menon: May I know whether this amount is sufficient enough to carry out the repair of all the instruments which are now lying idle?

Dr. H. Parameswaran: Yes, Sir. We are very anxious to be very economical and to avoid any loss to Government. In this connection I wish to point out that we have not put up any large buildings or engaged the services of many experts. We are carrying on very nicely with local men and at the moment nothing more is needed.

Mr. Kochikal P. Balakrishnan Tampi: I wish to know whether the work is being carried on without the help of any expert?

Dr. H. Parameswaran: No Sir. There are people on hand quite competent to deal with every aspect of the work involved.

The question that Government be granted a sum of Rs. 2,310 under Demand XXX—Scientific and Miscellaneous Departments—Stores Purchase Committee—was put and carried.

The Demand was passed and the grant was made.

DEMAND XXXI—MISCELLANEOUS CHARGES.

Rajyasevapravina G. Parameswaran Pillai: Sir, I move for a supplementary grant of Rs. 5,000 under Demand XXXI—Miscellaneous Charges. This sum is required for relief measures on account of the refugees who are in distress. The deterioration in the international situation and the occupation by the enemy of Malaya, Singapore and Burma, where a very large number of Travancoreans were employed in one capacity or other, have resulted in their return to Travancore and such of them as have been successfully evacuated from those areas have come back almost destitute. Government are receiving representations from various quarters that they should step in to afford relief to them. Government have also arranged for information being given about the number of persons who are being evacuated into this country from time to time. These Travancore nationals who were abroad and who were living a prosperous life have all been obliged to come back and under conditions entirely different from what they were used to. In the case of those who can afford to find employment here or who possess properties or funds in this country to enable them to carry on, no relief may be required at all. But there are many who stand in real need for relief without which their condition would be altogether miserable. Government have, therefore, as a first step allotted a sum of Rs. 5,000. They are aware that this allotment may prove to be inadequate for the purpose in view. But as further enquiries disclose the need for additional relief, Government will be only too glad to ask this House for fresh

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